

tear the rust off my heart!

Londoners

in Love



edited by Anna Fleet
project editor/publisher Wayne Ray

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CONTENTS

Cathy Inculet & Wayne Ray

In All The World He Did Not Know
The Abyss
Save The Grapes!

Wayne Ray

Double Immigration of Usma Nova
Are You Jewish
Poem For A Troubled Heart

Cathy Inculet

Time Is What I Ask Of You
17½ Hours
It s Not Hard Being Alone

Wendy Lycett

Posing For Picasso
Runners Return

Wayne Morris

Tariza Dance For Me

Luzmaria Jaramillo

When You Perch So Close To Me
Womb of Winter

Nina Davis

We Who Care

Megan Timney

Waiting For Freedom
Loneliness

Sandy Lewis

Crossroads

Linda E. Fraser

hard of hearing
the mermaid's tale
the end of the ride

Richard Yake

Imitation And Tomorrow
Neon Figure 8's

John Sherritt

Lost

Josephine De Vincenzo

Fallen
Unknown

Janos Uzelmann

Untitled

Richard Grove

A Walk on the Beach
Sweetie, Just a Sec
Little Brother Chris

Kevin Angelo Hehir

Honey Tangerine

Joanne Green

My Task

What Can I Give

Cornelia Hoogland

On Returning

Stranger s Hand at 6000'

My Father s Smell

Lynn Harrigan

Redefining Grace

Windsor-Montreal Corridor

The Watchers

Penn Kemp

Three Times

Poem For Peace in Two Voices

London Hunt Club Reception

Dan Ebbs

To Visit /to^{be}

Shivinand

Circle Intent

IN ALL THE WORLD HE DID NOT KNOW

Wayne Ray & Cathy Inculet

In all the world he did not know
how to say I love you
to the ones that mattered the most.
No,
It wasn't that he didn't know how to say it,
it was that he did not know how to say it so
that they would understand.

In all the world she did know
how to say I love you
to the ones that mattered the most.
It wasn't that she knew how to say it,
it was that they did not know it
when she smiled and her lips didn't move.

But he said it anyway
to the still lips that screamed I love you.
Eyes were opaque
and they became two mouths talking.
Drum and anvil poised, unused.
I love you.

Doesn't matter.
Wait come back,
I wanted to . . .
I wanted to . . .
Never mind

They pulled away from the mirrors, speaking
thoughts intermingled in time/space
simultaneous hearts bleeding until
in person he read her lips, understanding.
She heard his voice vaguely, understanding
and they stood there
wanting to hold hands
both too shy to go first,
lost in the barrens of closeness.

I love you he thought.
I love you she thought.
She smiled, he was looking at her hands.

He could not raise his eyes
Try as he might
To look at her eyes
He got to her mouth

Back to her hands
Hands mouth hands
Damn it why wouldn't she look at him

And then he knew
She didn't need to

THE ABYSS

Wayne Ray & Cathy Inculet

He had seen her light on through the window darkly,
each morning after work.
He tried to cross the abyss of asphalt to her door,
yet felt helpless like snowfall on cedars, ready to melt.

Why didn't she look out the window just to see
the morning light that paled against his heart.
Again and again he tossed it toward her door,
a snowball getting smaller in a slowly melting roll
across the black and wide sun warming road
until only a tiny snowflake at its core
was left to reach and softly kiss her door

SAVE THE GRAPES!

Wayne Ray & Cathy Inculet

Generally, she considered the
mail, to be unimportant.
Less important than her chairs anyway,
but at least the floors were polished
and the house was landscaped.

But her house needed dusting
and her mail needed dusting,
in that indescribable way
of frustrating things.

Dusting is such a waste of time, she said,
like getting the mail everyday.

Was the potted plant too green
or the thoughts of dusting overblown?
Who wanted to move the bicycle, anyway?

Darn it all, even the plants are dusty.
Dusting plants? Don't we have anything
better to do?
The bicycle is my business.
Yes, it's dusty.
None of your business.

Why is the cat the only one
in the house that can scratch its back?
I could if I tried but the Venetian
blinds are open to the neighbors.

Okay, so I will close the blinds.
They're pretty dusty anyway,
and I will try to lick my back . . .
Just Did It!
You Missed It!
Too Late!
Too bad.

Were you not paying attention?
To the mail and chairs and the dust and me?

The mail is delivered.
The chairs sat upon.
The dust scattered,
and I am all of that.

Rooms and rafters, kitchen sink,
Oh God, I forgot about the tiles,
and the empty fish tank.
Screw the dust and put the lid down!
Shuffle, shuffle. Room to room.
Trees on the lawn, grass is green,
so are the walls, golden mailbox,
Golden shower to wash the dust.
Save the grapes!

Yes, yes, I ll feed the fish.
They yell at me.
You don t need me.

Cat drinks the guppies water
and not the guppies themselves.
Survival of the fattest, but
my weight loss has my pants
falling down, scuffing dust.
No belt, no mail, no more grapes.

My cat drinks the fish water.
Do you have a problem with that?
If you don t want
dust on your cuffs
next time, bring a mop!

Sorry,
I didn t mean to say that.
You brought your friendship
and that was more than enough,
more than receiving mail,
much better than dust.

I will give you string
to hold up your pants, my friend.
I will buy you a belt
if that is what you need.
As for the grapes,
they are fungible things.
I can get some more.
Be content my friend,
in grapes and love.

Grapes and Love?!
All the while, I ve sat on the stairs
and observed your eating habits,
cleaning habits . . . but love?

Place a grape in your naval,
I will eat it
Show me your vine and I will
make wine, but love?

Dust that off and your mail box
will be full, maybe I don t need
a belt to love your dust,
your fish. Feel my shadow!
Bring me my wine! . . . and the mail!

Place a grape
upon my chair
my love.

I checked my mail
and there was no letter from you.
My cat looked at me,
askance.
I just needed communication
from someone
from you
from a potted plant
from my cat
from a fish.

I placed a grape on my chair,
next to an unopened letter.
Stairs are funny things,
they assaulted me once
or maybe it was caused by the cat,
no matter.
A shadow being cast
when one goes up and down
the stairs.

If no shadow was cast,
then did I not go up,
or down, or was sunlight
the only factor, on my back
or in my eyes.
Blinded by the thought of high noon?

Nah, they were Venetian blinds,
slats of light.
No high noon here.
Today anyway.

To someone who used to live here.

I sat and looked at them
My cat looked at me.
I don't think the fish cared.

Used to live here? I live here still!
Among the dust and the clutter
or your grapevine heart.
Place the cat on your lap, listen
to the soft rhythm of the fish tank.

Close your eyes and feel
my empathetic love, my letters
are written on the dust hanging in the air.

When you move from room to room,
I speak to you, I can be read
on everything if you just open your heart.
Sleep and my letters settle on your eyes.
I touch your skin, taste your sweet wine.

Save the grapes!

DOUBLE IMMIGRATION

Wayne Ray

Was it the words left unsaid that kept you laughing,
or the thoughts before the smile?

The mouth is blind as
the tongue speaks insights
into the thread bare soul
and we lay our lives out
for each other to see and taste.

After the dinner is done.
After the white wine sipped.
After the lips part language,
I am lost and found.
You are lost from home, that
double immigration
that brought you here, but
you are not alone, memories
and new friends in this new land
stretch a smile across your face.

The coffee is getting cold
while your delicate fingers touch the cup
that only thinks about touching your lips.
We finish telling each other stories
distracted from the truth.
Was it the words left unsaid that kept you laughing
or the thoughts before the smile?

ARE YOU JEWISH?

Wayne Ray

Menorah in hand, you smile,
soft fingers caress the brass,
circle each empty hole
searching for the candles.
Other than a few close friends
and circumcision, that's the
closest I've been to being Jewish.

This menorah balanced in your hand
was willed to me after the death
of a friend of my father.
A tailor by trade,
found sitting in his easy-chair,
cigarette ashes piled on the rug
burnt out for three days,
exactly one year after his wife had died.

The way your face lit up
when you asked me "Are you Jewish?"
as you touched the menorah again
with your finger tips.
What did you expect to find?
A kindred spirit,
a religious experience,
the Torah on my bookshelf?

Well my raven-haired friend,
when I answered no,
your soul's candle lost the flame
that would keep this menorah burning
into the next millennium or
flood the Guff with its light
and this Goy regrets the day
he was born a Christian.

POEM FOR A TROUBLED HEART

Wayne Ray

I couldn't sleep at all last night
because of your troubled reality.
Soul stealers, babies and half naked women.
Dishonest women who bring out your anger
so that you have to stomp and cry and grieve.
You have found your power, yet,

between the lines remain powerless.
Violated by ritual ceremonies
past violations and soul fragments appear to interrupt
a scheduled life figured out and sad, sad
non sharing women, troubled and dishonest friends.

Here I am with my large hands
and arms not long enough to cover the miles
between us yet only six inches away from
a life-long commitment and I can't sleep.

Dialing the phone in my dreams
your number, finger tip memorized
waiting for you to rest your head on my shoulder.

TIME IS WHAT I ASK OF YOU

Cathy Inculet

Your precious time
cause when you spend your time with me
It doubles mine

My heart
Cannot rest
Unless
It s inside of you
My life
Can bide its time
Until
I can find you

I am crying
For choices I ve not made
I am finding
The strength to let me wait

In time
I know it will be clear
With time
You show me not to fear

Time in all its urgency
Time is different from distance
Time is unrelenting
And time can t promise me your face

In the morning
So soft I look at you
And wish for the time
To give to you

17 1/2 HOURS

Cathy Inculet

I lick the linger taste of parting kiss
Your scent is drifting slowly in my hair
Intoxicating insistent embrace
Were I to die so happy in its snare
And will we ask what shan t become of us
Our stories shared will choose that road in time
Two paths two lives were merged in wondrous touch
But I have known you always lover mine

I am forewarned please leave me with your scent
It breathes your nature or perhaps your past
If you belong to danger I'm content
In perilous desire then I m cast

Some promises were taken and some left
But my sweet friend there will be no regret

IT S NOT HARD BEING ALONE

Cathy Inculet

IT'S NOT HARD
BEING ALONE
BUT IT'S DIFFICULT
BEING LEFT THAT WAY
I CAN'T SAY
THAT I'D BLAME
YOU FOR TAKING
SOME TIME FROM ME
IT'S NOT AS IF
YOU'RE STEALING
I'M GIVING
IT FREELY
BUT SOMETIMES I WISH
THAT I DIDN'T HAVE
TO ASK
FOR IT BACK.

POSING FOR PICASSO

Wendy Lycett

My friend, it has been too long,
you must come visit, soon.
There is a bottle of Merlot waiting
on the pantry shelf.
I'll call you, soon, I promise,
as soon as I can get caught up on things.
Things. Strange how they pile up, possessions
and intentions. Assumed obligations.
Remember when we had no things, just faith?
When did it all get to be so much?

I have been meaning to plant bulbs for spring,
trim the cedars, turn the compost...paint
the front hall. Every morning I start a new poem,
and all day long the words just keep getting
tangled up. At night I fall asleep trying
to unravel the snarled strings of thought.

Last night I dreamt I was laid bare
upon a platter, posing for Picasso, like a feast.
So much ripe Mediterranean fruit...
pommegranite breasts,
perfect pear thighs; melons and grapes
tossed in here and there-- spare parts.
Pablo painted with a silver fork,
dipping the tines into egg yokes and wine,
wiping the ochre and burgundy
across the canvas in slow hypnotic circles.

You've been served better fare than this, I mouthed,
from ruby lips pasted on my belly. I boldly winked
the Prussian blue eye perched haphazardly
on my chin. This is your hunger, not mine,
he replied as he bit my plum cheek and dissapeared.

My friend, you must come to visit soon.
How about dinner--Tuesday?

THE RUNNERS RETURN

Wendy Lycett

my lips
trace
your throat

taste
your sweet
soul
in a kiss
you are indigo
and morning
vanilla
and sand
you are all
sensation, texture
image
and emotion
I bathe
in the meaning
you bring
to my reason
you are
my clean Delphi fires.

TARIZA, DANCE FOR ME

Wayne Morris

Tariza, won t you dance for me
You made us cookies and herbal tea
You were the woman dancing on TV
Tariza, won t you dance for me

Tariza, won t you dance for me
Tap on my window and come for me
Don t you get lost while homeward bound
Tariza, won t you come on down

We ll skip and splash our way on down the stream
Like Fred and Ginger in a movie scene
Innocent wisdom, Mother Nature s child
You re all Womyn, dancing free and wild

Tariza, won t you dance for me
I know you re shy, but it s only me
I love to hear it when you say, Oh Wow
Gentle woman, won t you dance with me now

Let your hair down, let your spirit soar
Kick u the dust on my kitchen floor
I ll play my guitar and make it ring
Tariza, won t you dance while I sing

You get lovelier each time I call
Don t give your age away an spoil it all
Quakin shakin in the fading night
I know you ve been dancin in the moonlight

(Repeat first stanza)

WHEN YOU PERCH SO CLOSE TO ME

Luzmaria Jaramillo

When you perch so close to me
I can hardly see you.
But when you fly,
then, I really love you.

WOMB OF THE WINTER

Luzmaria Jaramillo

Like the song of the robin
in the early morning
the melody of your words
came to me.

Rising from the womb of the winter
the breath of your soul appeared
to plant in me the seed of insomnia,
to take away the calm of my days
to bring to me this dream-like state.

WE WHO CARE

Nina Davis

We who care are the broken people
We who know carry the responsibility of knowing
We who have an awareness of life
Cannot live life thoughtlessly

We who care cannot be careless with others
We who see cannot pretend to be blind
We who hear cannot turn a deaf ear to another's cry

We who care struggle not only for ourselves
But for all those who don't
We who feel cannot ignore our pain
We who sense truth cannot tell lies

All of this can seem like an enormous
Burden for we who care

But we who care also know love
We who know, know the abundance of the universe
We who have an awareness of life are truly alive
We who see, can see the magnificent beauty around us
We who hear can hear the angels sing
We who feel, can feel the power of our heart beats
We who sense truth have meaning and purpose

What a gift life is for we who care

WAITING FOR FREEDOM

Meaghan Timney

Waiting for freedom and living so easy,
So easily dead, so easily mourned,
Living in anger, lust still to burn

Waiting for sadness and living so hard
So easily loved, so easily lost
Living in hatred, lust still to burn

Take the freedom and shove it out the window
Take the words I said and forget

Waiting for gladness and living so scared,
So easily trapped, so easily forgot,
Living in fear, lust still to burn.

Waiting for release and living so free,
So easily open, so easily relieved,
Living in choice, lust still to burn

Take the freedom and shove it out the window
Take the words I said and forget

Take the words I said and forget

LONELINESS

Meaghan Timney

It is silence.
There is an absence of everything,
nothing can be heard
except the sound of your own sobs, and fears.
A soft moan escapes your lips
as you look about and see
nothing but darkness.
You are sitting in a cage
from which you cannot escape.
No other living thing
can get near enough to penetrate.
You are alone, and nothing can help you.
The air is filled with tension,
it is thick and could be cut with a knife.
Your cheek is wet, and rough,
salty tears fall onto your lips,
you sob your heart out.
There is a bitterness inside you,
you feel so lost, so helpless,
and nothing can make you feel any different.

An aching deep within arises and pushes
past every other emotion.
You crave attention,
you crave love,
and honesty,
but cannot receive it.
You suck in your cheeks,
try to rid your mouth of the sour taste,
but cannot shake it.
You smell rotting flesh, and look around
to see the bodies of other lonely souls
lying on the cage floor.
The most intense desire
to rid yourself of life overcomes you.
But there is nothing
that can aid you
in your quest.
You are
entirely
on your own.

CROSSROADS

Sandy Lewis

I've arrived at the juncture
of my life.
Not knowing which way to turn,
I look for you,
but you are not there.
You have found your road
and travel on.
Alone, I must also trek;
not knowing the names of the streets,
not familiar with the people I meet;
a journey of increasing trepidation
toward sin or illusionment.
Love contrasts with hate,
black with white,
but there are no grey areas
left to travel through
the crossroads of my life.

HARD OF HEARING

Linda E. Fraser

you don't listen, she says to him often

but he does...
just not with his ears
(for he has no ears)

he has slowly unfurled,
uncurled his coils
and slid sinuously over her lazy surfaces

her bony toes and
hard, slender shins and
silk-over-marble hips, and
downy buttocks and backs of thigh, over
gaunt ribs and placid nipples, past
demure dips in her belly and pelvis,
her gristly navel nub, and
her sex nestled secretly proud in its curly nest

and he has heard her...
oh, he has heard her
speak with a genius that she is not
even aware that she possesses...

she is a river of signals
whenever she comes under his deaf tongue

THE MERMAID S TALE

Linda E. Fraser

when I found you, my darling
you were stumbling lost,
had long been standing
at the drawbridge of your own indecision
before a castle of self-loathing which
somehow you had forgotten you owned
you bade me find my own entrance
and without hesitation I did
carefully unlocking your gate

imagine my surprise when
you did not follow me
inside the stronghold that you yourself had built

when I asked you why you could not
bring yourself to come with me
you said you felt like a man pacing
back and forth in front of a shoe store,
not so much torn about
whether he would like
this pair or that pair in the window,
but rather unsure in the first place
whether he even needed shoes at all

I thought that was stupid. It was a castle,
not a shoe store...
at the lip of your drawbridge,
you let me feed you quite a while and

though your eyes saddened at the thought
of me crossing the bridge at night
cold and alone
somehow your melancholy
did not stop you from refusing
to traverse the threshold with me

I cannot believe I let you talk me into
camping at the foot of your bastion,
leaning against cold fortress walls,
while you stared at the ramparts
as if you had no idea they were yours,
completely blind to the author of their craftsmanship,
the turrets gathering dust
the sconces shifting, walls of fissures...

in the end, a travelling minstrel

was the one who finally accompanied me
inside your keep

by the time you dared follow to find me
I had long since grown my tail and scales
and sunk to the bottom of the murky moat

now that I am disappeared under water,
finally you see me--
ever circling--

a flashing arc of flesh and fin
auburn hair floating in a lunar sea
my mermaid mouth
telling you stories
about the children
we never had

THE END OF THE RIDE

Linda E. Fraser

dead love
squeals its brakes
and rolls to heaving grinding
halt

flat as a quilt it lies
a soft prison of misprision
that I can now cocoon me in
a patchwork of false evidence
that led me nowhere
except back to the platform

I wrap it tightly around me for warmth
run my hands over tis soft bulk
let it absorb my tears

beside me in the seat
he slumps over
green-faced with relief
he assures me
I will be safe now

I bring the quilt up to my face
and stuff it between my teeth
biting down hard to muffle the screaming

when I see that he is
shivering violently
in the seat beside me
I keep the quilt for my self

IMITATION AND TOMORROW

Richard Yake

this was going to be a love-poem
to end all love-poems
emotion perfectly structured
with all the right givens
to achieve a perfectly orchestrated climax

it was supposed to convey the warmth
and strength of a unique embrace
the kiss guaranteed to tickle toes
the flow of sexual energy and release
would glide the flow of lava
cementing pores both literal and figurative

it would have captured all the magic
of Respighi's Pines and Fountains
its uplift would have touched
the hearts of pole-vaulters

but i had a choice
i left you at the bottom of the stairs
so that i could write the love-poem
to end all love-poems

Richard Yake

time could be for us, naturalists at heart
let me give the net to you so I can try my wings

LOST

John Sherritt

Brown eyes, copper hair
smoldering fires burning,
deep in your soul
Promises made in the heat of the night
could never begin to explain
the passion that runs through your veins
Elegant, sexy, sad lady
feeling alone, surrounded by love
Never letting in, or down
your guard for fear that
somehow you will never win
Opening up like a flower at dawn
to the warmth of the world,
Somehow makes things better until
yesterdays thoughts come crashing down,
driving precious moments away from you
like water on fire, leaving smoke
to make everything mysterious,
shrouded in secrets, or lies, or both
Walking alone and wondering why,
no one to talk to, dying to cry
Oh, that I could hold your pain,
and take it away,
Reach into your heart
and heal the scars
from growing up too soon,
too fast, too far
Of life's evils opening your eyes without asking
Pain has twisted and shaped a beautiful lady
into protecting herself at all cost,
to herself
Feelings suppressed, emotions denied.
And a little girl that everyone loved,
gone somewhere deep inside
Come back, come out, come into the sun,
the warmth of your smile gladdens my soul
Your tender touch triggers my heart,
freeing my love to envelope us both
in that warm, beautiful feeling that
no one can touch,
or understand

until
all that is left
is you and me
together as one
drowning in love
caring for nothing,
just each other
Lost in ourselves
Lost together

Josephine DeVincenzo

Unknown to be only free,
Communicate as to be,
the human form that cannot see,
Revealing echos of that sacred spree.

The clouds filter
the sun in the sky.
As the clouds open up
moisture falls and
cleanses the dusty
ground.
And after the rain
everything comes
alive.

A WALK ON THE BEACH

for Eric and Shelley

Richard Grove

I want to walk on the beach
with you.

I want to walk on the beach
and explore the universe
in pooled foot prints.

I want to walk on the beach
with you and draw lines in the sand
with our toes
and see it washed away by gentle waves.

I want to walk on the beach
combing through flotsam and jetsam
looking for treasures
as the sun is setting.

I want to walk in one direction
until the moon rises over the foggy horizon.

I want to walk on the beach
with you in the dark
with starlight shining on your smile.

I want to walk on the beach
with you for the rest of my life.

SWEETIE JUST A SEC

Richard Grove

You can kiss me
till the printer finishes,
but not a minute longer.
You can talk to me
when Star Trek is done,
at eleven,
but not a minute sooner.
How was your day Sweetie,
oh just let me take that call,
just a sec.
Sorry, what was that,
dinner,
now?
so soon?
Be there in a sec sweetie.
Good night?
So soon?
Sweetie, just a sec.
I want to tell you something
what was it now
oh
I love you.

LITTLE BROTHER CHRIS

Richard Grove

My baby brother Chris
held my hand firm
in the now cool evening
of September.
Don't be a sissy boy. I said
Come, Let me show you the stars

Silver stripes of dew painted
our legs as we walked
through the uncut grass
at the edge of the lawn
down into the hay field
north past the lane.

This was territory little Christopher
had not ventured into
during the day let alone at night.
I was the brave 13 year old,
he was 9 years younger
clinging close a big brother's side
into the dark to see the bright sky
in a way that had never been revealed
to him before.

HONEY TANGERINE

Kevin Angelo Hehir

April 1998

You are my new favorite orange
I don't care if you were engineered by a chemistry student next to
4 pound tomatoes.

Honey Tangerine.

I hope she got an A, and a
new research grant, to gauge
the pleasures on palates like mine.

You see, I work in fruit.
For an exorbitant fee (and a dental plan) I punch in
and sell
you.

I discovered you one morning
my mouth tasted of cardboard. Like your carton.
Away from any customer, popping open a box...
I had you!

Before sweetness had left my tongue, a subtle bitterness asked to be acknowledged.
TASTE...mmm...AFTERTASTE.

When I was younger I would beg my older brother Conor, to take me to the snowy hill and push me
down.

I think he had more fun watching me bounce on my head.

I would fight back a few sniffles in a snowbank then back up the hill I'd tug the toboggan.

We both knew that my tears were the stamp on his passport home. Freedom.

Of course, he'd take his runs.

When I fumbled with ski-doo boot laces as rigid as my fingers, he'd pretend with the other older boys not to
be in Saskatchewan and ride standing up on my sled, going farther than any of us kids ever did.

I could never feel the blood.

My scream was always frozen by the sprays of snow too big for my mouth.

I would be tugged home to thaw in the den decorated, with Christmas cards from family I'd never know.

My chin would be covered with a summer bought Band-Aid from the second drawer in the upstairs
bathroom.

My brother would tell friends on the telephone of my innocent gushing smile and how this family
commitment thing was cramping his Grade 7 style.

I sit with Dad on the sectional, secretly bleeding.

Watching the seasonal rounds on t.v.

We pull oranges out of a cardboard box
tossing the green wrappers back in with unplucked and,
a new challenge begins.

Can you peel it in one piece? I know, from the numb lip and bloodied scarf that I'm inclined to dive in head

first, but Dad, he's taken holidays for this!
I accept the challenge and we both dig our right thumbs in. He always won.
Even after I could figure it out, he was always faster than me.
With a mocking wink he'd offer me a slice of his orange.

The victory orange.

I would always take the peel from the victory orange and put it together to form the shape of the original fruit.

Our rec-room was a 1970's, Canadian, Norman Rockwell.
Me and Dad watching black and white movies on the CBC little Paul, the future architect, sucking on Lego.
Conor talking 12 year old code into the big black phone all I could ever decipher was that our big brother
Mike was such a lucky duck.
He was watching colour television at the home of his first girlfriend.
Mum, caught between a wailing crib, boiling pots and As It Happens on the wireless.

I would always take the peel from the victory orange and put it together to form the shape of the original fruit.

You see, the rush of my youth always left me with more than one piece of rind. I would have needed glue to
make it look like an orange.

I had glue - Elmer's School glue purchased last September with 10 Hilroy Wide Ruled Notebooks, Laurentian
Pencil Crayons and a pair of Adidas ROM sneakers for gym class.
ADIDAS - All Day I Dream About Sex

Late those Christmas holiday nights.
I would be gluing badly coloured maps onto bristleboard for a Social Studies project about tectonic plates
(you didn't write papers then).
I was trying to show how the earth had at one time been just one mass of land.

Volcanoes, earthquakes and time have separated it into the many pages of our modern atlas.
I'd piece them together to form that one land mass of an older day.

I now sit in front of my computer and compact disc player and try to reconstruct my past.
Those bits of peel from a Prairie childhood.
Edges worn from decades of life.

No more the small Christmas orange.
I'm bigger now... like a grapefruit. Where,
before the bitterness leaves your tongue it is
the sweetness that begs to be acknowledged.

If I were to map the peels of my orange childhood on to
the new large bitter yellow.
I'd need pins.
After poking the pins the juice

would taste

like you.

You are my new favorite orange

Honey Tangerine.

I don't care if you were engineered by a chemistry student.

To me

you taste

like the south Saskatchewan sunshine.

MY TASK

(for my son Daniel)

Joanne J. Green

When you were born
I held you close to me
When you took your first step
I held your hand to steady you
When you were teething
I rubbed your gums to soothe your pain
When you went to school for the first time
I cried with you
When you felt proud of your job
I too felt your pride
When you took a wife
I was happy for you
When you had your first child
I knew my task was done
Done but not forgotten

WHAT CAN I GIVE?

Joanne Green

Those eyes are the same eyes
that were there eighty years ago
That brain is the same one
that analysed and computed
our daily schedule so many years ago
Those legs are the same ones that so long ago
held us up and saved us from falling
That mouth is the same one that kissed us goodnight
and kissed away the pain from those hurt fingers
Those feet are the same feet that went to work
and carried the basket of fresh fruit treats
so carefully home to our waiting hands
That heart is the same heart
that felt our sorrow and pain
so many years ago.

Is there not one bone in our bodies
that can just for a moment give something back?
What can I give?

How about a loving hug!

ON RETURNING

Cornelia Hoogland

You weren't born in St. Mary's
forty-two years ago to stand here now
at night's back gate to greet me.

Summers weren't sent to the great aunt
who taught you to waltz in Windsor,
to pour (without bruising) the tea,
to hear Beethoven's Fifth;
not held on Anne's lap, rocked;
neither was suffering put upon you--
to facilitate my return to the upperworld.

Clearly, you're not the lookout
on the back porch because I newly find
my heart's knuckle-shape, knock
my way up out of the dark machinery
of five grinding years that like a watch
dropped into a deep well keeps
ticking but that's all.

Light's high beam streams
from the bright room of your body,
the room behind your body,
from guitar's yellow acoustic
notes into night--a full moon
of a night the promised
light at tunnel's end.

You don't open the door, your heart,
your evergreen coat to catch me
home, but it feels this way.

STRANGER'S HAND AT 6000'

Cornelia Hoogland

A job at the Ford plant, says the man,
a cottage in Orillia, tinkering on cars and how the fathers
of the children of the women he loves
always skip. Leave their children just leave.

His first flight in eight years. Drumheller,
to visit a sister. She's given along milk bottles
packed in a beach bag-free gift
with cosmetic purchase-he lifts from the overhead.
Unwraps from a length of flannelette
the glass bottles he puts in my hand

to admire. I was missing
you. At a time I needed
rope the lessons in my life were
let go give up go back
to the marriage. To jail.
And smilingly. Nothing wrong.
The mother. The wife. The good wife.

The unarticulated inner life
shifting through my days like the cougar
in our camp summers ago.
Hot scat spotted on our short-cut
trail to the ocean. They shot it,
drugged it maybe, hauled it away.
Except from that room where it paces
through the dangerous years of not-saying,
not knowing that I could. Can.

I hand back the jar, his small pleasure.
Turn to the window, cloud bank below us.
How can mere vapour obscure everything?

I didn't know what I began later that summer
moving across the country to the new job.
Like flying: ticket in hand, the most you wonder
is what's for lunch and if you'll get a window seat.

I cried, maybe he did too
but when the plane started its long descent
into Toronto, and the blanket-chatter
between us was collected folded packed away,
the air cold, my eyes closed, the
factory-worker-surrogate-father
lifted my milk bottle hand from my lap
into his. Held it 20 wordless
minutes. We landed
the doors opened
and he gave it back.

MY FATHER'S SMELL

Cornelia Hoogland

Winter. Winter. Ice over the lake. A snowmobile spits sWinter. Ice over the lake. A snowmobile spits smo Winter. Ice over the lake. A snowmobile, the guns, the thermoses of coffee, the two men, plummet into the water. They sink.

The body below mine, the one waving
its arms, with snakes of hair
drowning in a cold sea,
at first I think is my friend's body, also drowning,
then I see is mine. So. I'm drowning.
Water fills my ears. I didn't know
it would be this silent. The green silence
after a tree's felled. The forest holding its breath.
Water fills my nose, my throat.
What about my wife my kids?
My 15 year old son.
I was 15 when my dad drowned!
Water storms the vessels leading in.
My eyes close.
It comforts me to die as he did.
Then I smell him, my father.
It's fall. We're poking the fire.
My father pulls me into his blanket,
into crooked warmth and the smell
that's saving me 40 years later.
The whole thing's a miracle
when I think how, in the bruising
downward of ocean, in battering death,
my father's ash-and-fire love
back flips, propeller-wings me
up against the stone
cold of rising up, up
like smoke, like sweet pipe tobacco.
Skidoo of tools, a gun,
weapons, metal. A man's world.
But it's my father's soft-in-sleep body
the wet dog smell of sweat and tobacco
that grows in me a kind of fin. A swimming fin.

I swim-walk
through huey not completely
dark water

I'm twice born
tipped out twice

a crack of light
a rift a gap a fissure

first my mother's watery sac

a space between rimmed shells

second my father's smell
40 years in the keeping
a sacred medicine
a kid of 7 hunting with his father
his blanket propellor-wings me
up against the stone cold
warmth
rising like smoke,
like the sweet pipe of his

body on mine
lassoes me, ropes me hard
through the blue canal
this is hardly
through a hole
a miracle, this is sacred
a hole in ice
med
ice
in

REDEFINING GRACE

Lynn Harrigan

As your memory failed,
I was sent to spend afternoons with you.
Your husband wanted to keep you busy,
to ward off the lethargy that held you prisoner
in the guest room, lying in the dark
thinking about god knows what.
On the good days, though, you played the piano,
showed me photographs & invited me on walks.
We ambled down city streets, closely admiring
tulips & lilacs, fine old homes & cats in windows.

One day you looked to the sky,
tracked an airplane & remembered
the gutsy girl who left home at eighteen
to teach in a reservation school,
the wife who graciously hosted parish luncheons,
the well-heeled lady who wore pearls, before
relinquishing them for sweats and running shoes.

On these days, the good ones,
you opened up your world for me
to glimpse the woman you were
for a moment, graceful once more,
no longer eluding the demands of this world.

WINDSOR-MONTREAL CORRIDOR

Lynn Harrigan

The train pushes eastward
carrying us from sleep
into a shadowed landscape
banked by leafless trees.
Skeletal remains outline
a late March horizon.
The sun,
emerging from its lakebed,
rises between shades of blue.

And the lake
becomes a cyclorama,
projecting Ontario prairies pink.
North west south remain uninspired
by this pink haze pulsing outward,
spreading like spilled paint
the colours of passion, until
salmon awakens an azure sky
reflected in layers of white on water,
icy remnants of winter.

Windsor seems a lifetime away.
The train inches forward,
crosses the Thames.
Looking down on its rocky banks,
I shift in my seat,
waiting for the track ahead to clear.

THE WATCHERS

Lynn Harrigan

a bus travels through city darkness
it s passengers focused on doors
folding and unfolding
unperturbed by the lurches
of unexpected stops
their destinations
unsigned and unmapped
marked only by shadows
leaning against lamp posts
idly kicking stones
into the silent street

THREE TIMES

Penn Kemp

The first thing, the only thing
Aunt Laura could say after
her stroke was "Three..Times."

This woman, calm and violent
spoke emphatically, oracular as
Sybil, these difficult syllables.

Her eye was milk of magnesia
blue bottle blue. Her white hair
shrill against pink scalp.

She knew. What? That things come
in sibilant threes. Three's a crowd.
I'll sing you three-oh. Threeee,
threeee the rivals.

Her chorus a pure prayer. What
other words, I wonder could otherwise
bracket her unconditional world?

After the second stroke, she learned
yes, she learned no. Of all the useless

words to speak, yes and no, I
thought. She could have nodded,
she could shake her head, but no.

She had to speak her gesture no
matter how treacherous lips bespoke.

Invoking those "Three times",
she jabbed a finger south of London,
pointing and grinning, fixing her

cataract stare where a child she
so doted on in her dotage lived
with a family that did not visit
her yellow brick Ontario cottage.

I stood and stroke her back, her
nape, her pate, stroking her back
to a time before chagrin, when will

alone could see her through.

What else would spook her when
at last her third time came around?

POEM FOR PEACE IN TWO VOICES

Penn Kemp

Calm came clear
of cloud
early one morning
before things started..

Calm come clear
of cloud

Calm came at noon..
A cardinal perched
on black bough
in blazing sun.

Calm come
clear
of cloud

Calm came at night
stretching as cats do,
constant stretch and change.

Calm come clear
of cloud

Forsythia brightened
as the house slept.

Calm come clear
of cloud

Now calm come
in the face of
brawl.

Now calm come
clear of
cloud.

LONDON HUNT CLUB: RECEPTION

Penn Kemp

Nobody told me
But I should have known

I wasn't supposed to
really try and cut

the ceremonial
layer of cake.

The wedding party waited,
smiling, smiling,

for the toasts to go on.

The groom tried to help.

Blood dripped from my finger
on waves of white linen.

TO VISIT /To ^{BE}
dan ebbs

The tourist has home and job to return to
a travellers home is

in the
kn sack
ap

the job

*in the
next town*

The tourist has itinerary in hand
and vouchers in pocket

a traveller dust thumb wind
on heels in

The tourist has excess money and curiosity

a traveller nothing

just
courage

CIRCLE INTENT

Shivinand

From a place of stillness of inner silence
 we intend the abstract

We beckon spirit

We move beyond the known and the
 unknown into the unknowable

We return to the source

In this circle, we await the presence

In the presence, we feel our common
 unity, our common union. We
 remember ourselves

We are one

We are free

We are here

London Poems

[illegible]

Wayne Ray
Publisher & Managing Editor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Kathleen Haynes

Loud Night On St. Julien

My London Years

The 50s Life

Barry Butson

Claim

The Nice People of London

Richard Grove

Swallowed By The Dark

Never Known It Wetter

J. Alvin Speers

Duty Post Vet

Bill & Norma Clare

Slippery

James Deahl

London Poems:

October Sunday at the Cove

A Winter s Day

Tanglewood Orchard

Bea O Donnell

Outside Queen Street Victorian Home

Grand Old Home Queen Street

Pat Austin

Victorian Library - Eldon House

Remembrance Day Plus Two (1994)

Barbara Phillips

Victoria Park

McManus Theatre

LOUD NIGHT ON ST. JULIEN

Kathleen Haynes

In the evening, laying in bed,
early, because I was only five,
I heard a rattle-banging on the wind
and I dreamed of what it could be.
maybe a giant, angry and cantankerous,
banging his tea mug on his table,
so that all his dishes rattled around
like a boisterous game of tiddley-winks,
or perhaps it was a gigantic skeleton
shaking its bones in a frantic dance
to escape the rag and bone man who
was coming down the street in his wagon,
or was it God moving His chairs
to welcome new guests to Heaven?
I didn't know it was the wooden talking bridge
at Egerton Street, announcing crossing cars.

MY LONDON YEARS

Kathleen Haynes

Eyes lit up, peeking like a small bird,
I saw jelly beans in jars
in the small store on Horton Street.
begging at two years old,
for this manna for the young,
six for a penny,
later two cent boodle bags of candy
at Buddie s Booth on Ham Road East.
older, going downtown by bus, alone,
allowance clutched in change purse,
joining a crowd milling noisily outside
the Odeon, for Saturday movie club.
Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy, Green Hornet
in cliff-hangers each week,
titillating us with suspense.
popcorn flying, with unison screams
of laughter punctuating cartoons.
roar, rumble and crash of roller-skating
at the London Arena on Bathurst Street,
a Saturday morning thrill strapping
roller skates on your shoes,
circling the huge wooden floor
in time to rhythmic music.
those owning boot roller-skates not in our class,
but nothing mattered as long as
you stayed upright.
Ealing School, white brick and solid,
smelling of old orange peels,
dispensing education despite our hijinx.
years I spent on St. Julian
were the best, the worst.
Ealing and the world not ready for a
spirited child who balked at discipline.

THE 50S LIFE

Kathleen Haynes

girls, teenaged girls, ,and young women,
dressed in a flamboyant
assortment of coloured cottons,
ready for work.
walking through Victoria Park,
chatting companionably,
from the rooms or apartments they rent,
with roommates.
the punctually melodic bells of St. Paul s
ring eight-thirty and their strides
automatically quicken.

giggling girls, and solemn senior stenographers
head to where they'll congregate
and chat by the files.
some are homesick for the towns
of Southwestern Ontario
where they go home weekends.
it's Monday mornings call
to the polished desks and spotless halls
of London Life. I was barely seventeen
when I went there as a file clerk full time.
for us all, responsibility came early

THE NICE PEOPLE OF LONDON

Barry Butson

London is packed with nice people.
I wish the whole world was the same.
I like nice people,

but cannot stop taking advantage.
Nice people almost demand ill treatment
because, if they had a clue about things,
they would not be nice.

Things - you know, how a man bends
over a woman, how thieves gather
early in the darkest morning, how
our minds perpetrate murder inside cars
behind smoked safety glass.

Nice people have no tolerance either,
for they have only gone two inches
along the yardstick of morality.
Those who've gone three or more
they condemn.
But if the inches are there,
why not take 'em?

Nice people would never whack
anyone's bare ass with a stick.
But maybe a lot of us need
and want
a really good whacking

and who's gonna apply it?
Certainly not them.

CLAIM

Barry Butson

Driving my daughter and her son to the doctor's,
I pass downtown locales where - as a young man -
I caroused. Towards them I feel fondly.
No matter that now I am mere stuffed grizzly;
I had my days
as a scholar and scamp,
seasons of raccoon and adder.

These buildings are proof,
these students arriving in town
for a new year of pranks
are just me & you again.

Memory is a greedy claimant.

SWALLOWED BY THE DARK

Richard Grove

As young lads we would on occasion
get caught out after dark
with adventures luring me and brother Peter
further past Erwin's farm than normal.

The night would swallow
the narrow worn lane
leading up to our grey stone house.
With a gulp it would devour the trees
that lined its edge
and gobbled us into fear.

The fence line in the distance
at the top of the field
was the first to disappear
as we galloped homeward
through growing mist
rolled over the tall fields of corn.

A silver corona of moonlight
would slowly appear
around tall tufts of grass
that could hardly be seen
as night emerged.

The new damp darkness devoured
everything except what was a brave
heart beat away.

NEVER KNOWN IT WETTER

Richard Grove

When I was just a young lad
we had a rainy spring.
The farmers all said
they d never known it wetter
and by gosh it was wet that spring.

Galoshes to the mail box at the end of the lane.
Galoshes to school every day for weeks.
Galoshes even into town on post office days.
The farmers all said
they d never known it wetter
and by gosh it was wet that spring.

The sun only showed its face
when we weren t lookin
I suspect between rain drops or at night
when we were sleepin
though judgin by the incessant drip, drip
in the attic into a tin pan it even rained then.
The farmers all said
they d never known it wetter
and by gosh it was wet that spring.

It seemed like it rained week after week after week
My play cloths were wet.
My school clothes were wet.
Even my Sunday go to church cloths got wet
and I got in trouble.
The farmers all said
they d never known it wetter
and by gosh it was wet that spring.

The one or two days it didn t rain that spring,
a silver mist hung in the air all day
so as you could feel it
wet on your face as you walked.
The farmers all said
they d never known it wetter
and by gosh it was wet that spring.

By summer it finally stopped rainin
but then the humidity set in.
The farmers all said
it was the most humid it had ever been
and by gosh it was humid that summer.

DUTY POST VET

J. Alvin Speers

I remember London
in nineteen-fifty two
At New Westminster DVA Hospital
I was an airman passing through.

Sent down from Air Force Base Clinton
When a bronchial pneumonia bout
Exposed my deviated septum.
Operation would straighten it out.

The happiest fellow in the ward
Was a double amputee;
Veteran of the Second World War,
A hero indeed was he!

Rain or shine, each day was fine
In his optimistic point of view.
His routine never altered
And he was never blue.

His body ended at his hips,
But man, his arms were strong.
Bright and early every morning
He moved himself along.

Heaving self from bed on waking
Into wheel chair sitting near,
Off to washroom for ablutions,
Grinning, whistling with good cheer.

After breakfast, all decked out
With regimental tam on head,
Brass insignia carefully shined
On said head dress, which was red.

Then he wheeled himself to post
Near main entrance double doorway
To wait and greet each one who entered,
Wishing them a happy day.

He had served his king and country,
Lost both legs in battle fray,
Yet maintained most healthy outlook
Uplifting all met along the way.

Each time I think of London town
I recall the cheerful vet
Who was unforgettable inspiration,
Second to none that I have met.

"SLIPPERY"

Bill & Norma Clare

In Storybook Gardens in London's fair city
Lived a young sea lion whose nick-name was 'Slippery'.

Around his pool he zoomed and cavorted;
Flipping and flapping, he flopped and he snorted.

He thrived on attention; he liked to perform,
Then gracefully bowed for each grand encore!

Now Slippery was truly nobody's fool,
And one night he leapt right out of his pool.

He waddled on down to the old River Thames,
Then swam fast and furious around every bend.

He played under bridges, stopping often to rest,
Where he was heading was anyone's guess!

To the mouth of the Thames, then in Lake St. Clair
He dodged the huge lake freighters here and there.

Down the Detroit River and into Lake Erie
To the Ohio rivers he quickly did flee.

When folks tried to catch him the big chase was on,
And in these deep waters, a new star was born!

He outwitted them all, then came up to peek, Why,
Slippery was now playing hide-and-go-seek!

With hooks and with nets the crowds did pursue,
While one sheriff hurled out his great big lasso!
This sea lion pup of international fame
Discovered that this was a great fun-filled game!

Slippery ducked under waves, then sped far away,
Keeping his would-be owners at bay.

At night he hid in the dark shoreline reeds,
Giggling and whispering, "You'll never catch me!"
But one day in a boathouse, he fell sound asleep,
And succumbed to his captors without e'en a peep!

He was packed in a crate, this infamous clown,
Down the highway his motorcade headed for home.

In cities and villages folks cheered him on,
As "The Slippery Procession" moved slowly along.

With welcoming signs and a momentous parade
London welcomed him home one bright summer day!

There in his pool, he put on his old act,
For this marathon swimmer was thrilled to be back!

He flipped through his shows and flopped down his slide,
As a chorus of cheering arose nation-wide!

LONDON POEMS:

James Deahl

OCTOBER SUNDAY AT THE COVE

I

Maple and oak stain the water red;
I watch their colour shift
around the still surfaces of stones
where a dry creek enters the cove.

II

All afternoon things happen around me:
small animals I can never see
root in fallen leaves; fish leap
from their dark homes below.

III

I do nothing but sit quietly
while hidden lives rise
and fall about me. The heron
has yet to follow the kingfishers south.

IV

We must meet hidden travellers
wherever we journey. The cove is dead calm.
From within God's blue silence
an osprey's piercing call.

A WINTER'S DAY

I

Ice crystals ghost across
sheets of frozen water.
Snow fills the little baskets
of Queen Anne's Lace
with blue silence.

Darkness resides
among bare branches.
The familiar birds
stay in the brush, remain
deep in their animal solitude.

Everywhere sons wait
for the cup to pass.
The fathers have grown old,
they silently gather at the river
of grief, at the river of hope.

II

Winter bulls stamp sullenly
within the lee of stone barns.
Frozen drifts sweep like
a white sea across road
and pasture.

I boil water for tea,
look into the west
as if expecting deliverance.
I wait for snow to melt,
for rivers to freshen.

Downstream, chains of great cities
loom out of farmland.
Men in black stand
at the gates of empire
like convicts awaiting darkness.

III

Our sun flames down wrapped
by winter colours;
darkness gathers along
a frozen river
as the evening star comes.

Beneath its skin of ice
the Thames flows to Lake St. Clair
where another, deeper river
carries the cold of the North
faithfully, without regret.

There can be no salvation
through deeds alone.
The creek lies buried
when winter purifies
the ravine with white hands.

TANGLEWOOD ORCHARD

James Deahl

After weeks of dry weather
snow builds its white house
in the summer bower.

II

Far to the west, quicksilver clouds
blot out our distant sun;
the last leaves rattle their bare trees.

III

Cardinal and blue jay
decorate scrub and hedgerow
the only colour to touch the woods this season.

IV

I cast out crusts for birds and rodents.
Dark smoke rises into the sunset;
I open the door to the winter.

V

All night going home
the wind carries bits of light
into morning's bright hive.

OUTSIDE QUEEN STREET VICTORIAN HOME

Bea O'Donnell

Porch face of the old Victorian home
Is scored like lady's cake or gingerbread.
Veil's diadem carved into her forehead
Now, cutting tool's rusting on the front lawn.
Curtains over front, twelve-paned windows drawn
Skirts pulled up close, held out of the laneway.

Side turrets gripped close, like sceptres in fists
Hollow silos hold buffets and linen.
Where bone china and laces were shown in
Before unpaid staff's towel was thrown in
Frail bird cage of spindled front verandah
Which fashionable finches'd once flown in.

Top front facade now decapitated
So primped; lady-like, wooden tendrils grace
Trifoil gables' windows round, powdered face
Sad, bonneted by its segmented ruffle.
At the back a grey cinderblock bustle,
Laneway medallions glint off intruders.

GRAND OLD HOME QUEEN STREET

Bea O'Donnell

Home's phials kept topped up with prestige
Ball finial cap turret flask pairs
Pendules like princess's ornaments.
Newel urns crowning the stairs.

An institution since 1850
Innermost rooms, no windows to outside
Interior control, stronger than the seasons
Treading years on years of carpet runs.

Coronna circling round windows.
Each smooth brick king pin shaped .
And dentelle line of demarcation
Tailored, cinched tight between upstairs
And less private ground floor of common man's station

Airs exhaled through upper eaves' soffit
Front wrought iron edged, not
A promenade verandah
Quoin-patched elbows keep close neighbours at bay
Low buildings on grounds watch up in awe.

VICTORIAN LIBRARY - ELDON HOUSE

Pat Austin

past parasol and canes in an elephant leg
off darkened hall
the room itself
where the curious look from a distance
at pictures of ancient Rome,
seashell gleam of china,
and dusty books stacked thick

no one can inspect
the blackcold fireplace
 framed by old Dutch tiles,
sit on fragile chairs
or write with quill at spindly desk;
the rope curves firmly against intruders
 from the present
- this room is waiting for phantoms
 from the past

REMBRANCE DAY PLUS TWO (1994)

Pat Austin

Sunday . . .

Centennial Hall

Gilbert and Sullivan music is a pleasant
presentation
though I keep thinking of the ceremony Friday
for all those dead . . .

Intermission

(in Victoria Park)

but where did all the poppies go?
last leaves flutter in a kind of mist
and the green statue soldier
stands astride, looks west.
A few walkers scurry past
not looking up . . .

suddenly, a friend who came from the Isles
some years ago,
hurries out the other door
restrains tears
stands and gazes across the street

VICTORIA PARK

Barbara Phillips

lights raise diaphanous garlands
on trees evening sentinels on guard
in winter darkness smooth as velvet
over the rink moon cool light follows
skaters some are lovers holding hands
on the smoothest journey
they will ever take together
getting in the way are children
they sprawl in all directions
as feet in new skates reject balance
laughter and shrieks bounce off snowbanks
later mists settle among forgotten mittens
snow rich cocoons pillow dreams
somewhere near Victoria smiles

MCMANUS THEATRE

Barbara Phillips

children squirm in line
when will they let us in
why are we standing here
ushers keep order at the doors
washrooms are well attended
under the Grand a hush of excitement
bounces off echo lit walls
when it's time a scramble for seats
snowsuits get tangled in scarves
as the lights dim faces are tuned
to the stage someone tumbles into an aisle
there is a swift reprimand in off stage
whispers actors
dressed in primary colours
project unworldly voices to tell
the story young eyes stare
small hands point
what's he doing mom
what did he say
questions fall like polka dots
parents' answers become torn umbrellas

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